

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /084 W
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P 081525Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7130
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN
USMISSION SINAI

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, IS
SUBJECT: BEGIN STRENGTHENED BY DMC DECISION TO RESUME TALKS

REF: TEL AVIV 4954

1. THE DMC'S DECISION OF JULY 6 TO RESUME COALITION TALKS
WAS TAKEN WITH A NOTICEABLE LACK OF ENTHUSIASM. WE
LEARNED FROM ONE OF THE VOTING PARTICIPANTS (MK AKIVA
NOFF) AT THE MEETING WHERE THE DECISION WAS MADE THAT
MANY COULD HAVE VOTED EITHER WAY. THE FEELING WAS
PERHAPS SUMMED UP BY MK SHMUEL TAMIR WHO WAS QUOTED AS
SAYING "NONE OF THE OPTIONS (BEFORE THE DMC) ARE
EXCITING." APPARENTLY THE DECIDING FACTOR FOR MOST
OF THOSE OPTING TO RESUME NEGOTIATIONS WAS THE WISH
NOT TO HAND BEGIN A REBUFF ON THE EVE OF HIS DEPARTURE
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FOR WASHINGTON.

2. THE EFFECT IN FACTAN WILL BE TO GIVE BEGIN A
DECIDED BOOST AS HE PREPARES FOR HIS WASHINGTON
TALKS. HE FIRST MEETING OF THE RESUMED LIKUD-DMC
NEGOTIATIONS IS SET FOR JULY 10. IT IS DOUBTFUL
THAT THEY WILL REACH FRUITION BY THE TIME BEGIN

LEAVES. BUT EVEN THOUGH HIS COALITION WOULD STILL BE RESTRICTED TO A 63 VOTE MAJORITY IN THE KNESSET, THE PROSPECT OF A BROADER GOVERNMENT WOULD BE VERY MUCH ALIVE. BY ITS DECISION, THE DMC HAS PUT ONE FOOT THROUGH THE DOOR OF ENTERING THE COALITION. ASIDE FROM THE SUBSTANCE OF THE FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS, THE DYNAMICS OF THE SITUATION ALONE WILL NOW FAVOR JOINING. HAVING ONCE BEFORE BROKEN OFF TALKS, A SECOND RUPTURE BY THE DMC WOULD BE PSYCHOLOGICALLY MORE DIFFICULT; AND THE DMC KNOWS THAT ABORTING A SECOND TIME WOULD BE HARMFUL TO ITS IMAGE.

3. IT CANNOT BE SAID THAT THE LIKUD DID NOT GO PART WAY IN MEETING THE DMC'S DEMANDS. PARTICULARLY IN THE AREA OF FOREIGN POLICY, THE LIKUD CAME UP WITH CERTAIN FORMULATIONS TO BRIDGE THE WIDE DIFFERENCES WITH THE DMC. AT THE LAST MINUTE AND FOLLOWING THE BREAKDOWN OF THE FIRST ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE DMC, THE LIKUD INCLUDED A REFERENCE TO RESOLUTION 242 IN THE GOVERNMENT'S GUIDELINES. IN THIS TALKS WITH YADIN OVER THE LAST TWO WEEKS, BEGIN AGREED THAT SETTLEMENTS QUESTIONS WILL BE REFERRED FOR DECISION TO THE KNESSET COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY ON THE DEMAND OF ANY ONE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MINISTER. THERE IS STILL WIDE DIVERGENCE ON A NUMBER OF ISSUES, INCLUDING THE ONE THAT THE DMC HAD NAILED TO ITS MASTHEAD--ELECTORAL REFORM. YADIN HAS RESTATED HIS POSITION THAT A CHANGE IN ISRAEL'S ELECTORAL SYSTEM IS A SINE QUA NON TO ENTERING THE GOVERNMENT. BUT HERE TOO A NARROWING OF THE GAP SEEMED TO HAVE OCCURRED WHEN THE DMC WAS INFORMED THAT THE NRP DOES NOT HAVE A VETO WITHIN THE COALITION ON THIS SUBJECT.

4. BEGIN'S HANDLING OF THE TALKS IN WASHINGTON MAY WELL BECOME A FACTOR IN THE COALITION NEGOTIATIONS. IF HE IS SEEN TO BE RIGID IN HIS TALKS WITH THE PRESIDENT, THIS COULD MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE DMC TO BECOME A PARTNER IN THE GOVERNMENT. SHOULD BEGIN SHOW FLEXIBILITY, AND PARTICULARLY IF THE VISIT IS A SUCCESS, THE LINGERING DMC HESITATION MAY EVAPORATE. LEWIS

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